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Custody Case SCS 2 of 2
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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The
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. Ridgeland Ave.
Oak Park,
Illinois 60304
(312) 383-3113

Leon Riley
ecutive Minister

ce B. Newton
President

February 2, 1978

The Honorable Secretary of State
State Department
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: John Stoen
Georgetown
Guyana, So. America

Dear Secretary Vance:

I write out of urgent concern for the welfare of a six year old child, John Stoen. This child is being detained in Guyana, contrary to the wishes of his parents and legal custodians, Timothy and Grace Stoen, all of whom are citizens of the United States.

The child is being kept in Guyana through the efforts of the Reverend James W. Jones, and is being used as a hostage, in effect, by Mr. Jones in a conflict between Mr. Jones and the parents.

You need to know that Mr. Jones is a self-expatriated leader of a religious movement in the United States which generated the fanatical commitment of thousands of persons, including the admiration of a number of popular political leaders. Though that movement was related to the religious body of which I am a part, it now is clear that the trust which so many gave to Mr. Jones so unreservedly was tragically misplaced. Many of his most devoted followers have discovered him to be manipulative, coercive, and deeply vindictive, while still seeming to many persons to be credible and charismatic. Mr. Jones is, in short, a beguiling individual who is apparently capable of wreaking havoc with people's lives.

The sole reason it is important to Mr. Jones to keep John Stoen is that John's parents have both "defected" from the church which Mr. Jones leads. Not only has Mr. Jones acquired the properties and assets of many of his followers, fleeing this country with those riches; at least in this instance, he even has a child of two of his disillusioned devotees.

Having some personal knowledge of both Mr. Jones and of Mr. Stoen, I implore the intervention of the just powers of our country to enable the re-uniting of John Stoen with his

parents. Knowing both men, I know that any claims of James W. Jones must be given very close scrutiny, for he would deny the common human rights of those who are no longer faithful to him.

Though I trust that your Department has adequate information on this case, I would be pleased to seek to see that you receive any data which you need.

I anticipate that your Department will be unremitting in its efforts until young John has been returned safely to his parents.

Yours very sincerely,

Leon Riley

Leon Riley

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, U. S. A.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20520

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The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Greater Chicago

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Oak Park,
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(312) 383-3113

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